

**Statement of Representative Jo Bonner
Ranking Member of the Investigative Subcommittee in the Matter of Charles B. Rangel**

Adjudicatory Subcommittee Meeting in the Matter of Charles B. Rangel

July 29, 2010

Thank you, Madam Chair, Ranking Member McCaul and members of the Adjudicatory Subcommittee.

By the very nature of this rare – but not without precedent – public meeting of this Subcommittee, there are naturally many questions that are out there... questions by other Members of Congress about what is happening to one of our colleagues and, I believe, more importantly, questions by the American people.

In the five minutes I have been given, allow me attempt to answer some of these questions.

First, there is no doubt that Congressman Charles Rangel has a compelling story – he was a private – as his autobiography says, “left to die on a battlefield in what is now North Korea.”

He earned the Purple Heart and Bronze Star for his bravery. He was a fatherless high school dropout who went from pushing a hand truck in the Garden District of New York City to becoming one of the most powerful – and well-liked – figures on Capitol Hill.

But Mr. Rangel’s life story is not why we are here today for in a very real way, every American has their own unique story to tell.

Instead, Congressman Green and I are here to present to this Subcommittee – and the American people – a summary of different story altogether.

We have a responsibility to submit evidence to this Adjudicatory Subcommittee that Mr. Rangel may have broken the Rules of the House and brought discredit to this body at a time when the American people have such little faith in our ability – as their elected Representatives - to do our job.

In fact – according to Article 1, Section 4 of the United States Constitution – it is the duty of the House to “punish its Members for disorderly behavior.”

As such, this is truly a sad day where no one – regardless of their partisan stripes – should rejoice.

I want to take another minute to explain how we got to where we are.

As has been noted, the investigation into Mr. Rangel’s activities has been ongoing for almost two years. These matters are serious and I believe the record will show were being looked into by the Ethics Committee at the time Mr. Rangel wrote the Committee and requested a formal review.

During the course of the investigation, Mr. Rangel was given multiple opportunities to settle this matter. Instead, he chose to move forward to this public trial phase.

Since the beginning of this investigation, the Full Committee has been led by three different Chairpersons and 2 different Ranking Members. On the Investigative Subcommittee – that today is presenting the Statement of Alleged Violation – we have been served by Mr. Green of Texas as Chair, while I served as Ranking Member.

The other members of this bipartisan Subcommittee were Mr. Scott of Virginia and Mr. Hastings of Washington State.

Madam Chair, I can say with certainty that each of us had every intention of completing this investigation before the end of 2008.

But in part due to additional evidence that was submitted, multiple delays in receiving information we requested and subpoenaed, and an extension on two separate occasions of the Investigative Subcommittee's jurisdiction because of new facts that came before the Subcommittee, this investigation concluded just last week.

Not everyone in this room - or watching this at home on TV - may know that the House Ethics Committee is the only truly-bipartisan Committee with an equal number of Democrats and Republicans.

5 Democrats and 5 Republicans sit on the Full Committee, in judgment of our peers.

And today there are 4 Democrats and 4 Republicans – as has already been noted, none of whom volunteer for this duty – who sit on this Adjudicatory Subcommittee.

While at times some Members of the Investigative Subcommittee disagreed on some of the counts ultimately included in the Statement of Alleged Violation the record should note that all supporting evidence was transmitted to the Full Committee with the unanimous support of the bipartisan Investigative Subcommittee.

While my role as Ranking Member of the Investigative Subcommittee has now come to an end, I want to thank Mr. Green, Mr. Hastings, Mr. Scott and the Committee staff for their dedication and time devoted to this matter.

And whatever happens from this point forward I believe it is incumbent upon each of us to do our part – individually and collectively – to take a measured step in the direction of helping to restore the trust of the American people in this, “The People’s House” where we are all privileged to serve .

Thank you, Madam Chair.